MEMORANDUM

To: Attendees

From: Melissa Williams
Project Manager
Maryland Transportation Authority

Date: September 30, 2003

RE: Focus Group Meeting # 2
Section 100: I-95, I-895(N) Split to North of MD 43
Perry Hall Middle School, Perry Hall, Maryland

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On September 30, 2003, the Maryland Transportation Authority (Authority) conducted the second Focus Group Meeting for the Section 100 project planning study. The purpose of the meeting was to introduce the Focus Group to possible alternates considered for the Section 100 project. Those in attendance included:

Mr. A.J. Bierman-US 40 East Business and Civic Association
Mr. John Bowers-Nottingham Properties
Mrs. Susan Ches-Hazelwood Park East Civic Association
Mr. George Ches-Hazelwood Park East Civic Association
Mr. Randy Cogar-Essex/Middle River/White Marsh Chamber of Commerce
Mr. Jim Dorsey-McCormick, Taylor & Associates
Mr. Keith Duerling-Maryland Transportation Authority
Mr. Ken Goon-Maryland Transit Administration/RKK
Mr. Emery Hines-Baltimore County Department of Public Works
Mr. Walt Kulis-Johnson, Mirmiran & Thompson
Mr. Jack Moeller-Johnson, Mirmiran & Thompson
Ms. Roxane Y. Mukai-Maryland Transportation Authority
Ms. Andra Parker-McCormick, Taylor & Associates
Mr. Keith Quintrell-Johnson, Mirmiran & Thompson
Ms. Wanetta Thompson-Garden Village Park Community Association
Mr. Bob Sweeney-Maryland Transportation Authority
Mr. Tom Seymour-South Perry Hall Improvement Association
Mr. Charlie Utermohle-McCormick, Taylor & Associates
Mr. Sam Wilkes-McCormick, Taylor & Associates
Ms. Melissa Williams-Maryland Transportation Authority
Ms. Peggy Winchester- South Perry Hall Improvement Association
Mr. Matt Wolniak-Johnson, Mirmiran & Thompson
Mr. Al Zorn-Perry Hall Improvement Association

Ms. Williams, the Authority Project Manager for Section 100, began the meeting with brief introductions. She then reviewed information discussed at the previous focus group meeting including the role of the Focus Group, the I-95 Master Plan and the Section 100 project.

BACKGROUND

Ms. Williams reviewed the three Master Plan Concepts recommended for further study during the Section 100 project planning study including:
Master Plan Concept C-1: No-Build
Master Plan Concept C-5: Managed Lanes
Master Plan Concept C-6: General-Purpose Lanes

FOCUS GROUP SURVEY

At the first Focus Group meeting, members were encouraged to present Section 100 information to members of their organizations and document the three top concerns they wanted to see addressed by the Section 100 project. Members were asked to share those concerns.

Concern: Tom Seymour asked what the effects of Section 100 will be on nearby bridges, such as the Rossville Boulevard Bridge and the King Avenue Bridge. The King Avenue Bridge was recently rebuilt. Will it now be rebuilt again?

Answer: Jack Moeller responded that the Rossville Boulevard Bridge that crosses over I-95 is in need of replacement, independent of the Section 100 Project. Even if the Rossville Boulevard Bridge is replaced prior to the completion of the Section 100 project planning study, the improvements will be designed for compatiblity with the proposed Section 100 alternates. Potential impacts to the King Avenue Bridge will be evaluated during the project planning process. There is a possibility exists that the King Avenue Bridge may need to be replaced.

Concern: Will additional noise walls be considered? Members in the South Perry Hall area are concerned about increased noise levels near their homes.

Answer: Mr. Moeller responded that noise monitoring and evaluation is scheduled to occur during the project-planning phase of the project. As designs for Section 100 are refined, the need for noise mitigation such as walls will be determined.

Concern: Susan Ches asked how much noise there will be during construction. Construction recently completed along Hazelwood Avenue was very loud, especially overnight, preventing residents nearby from sleeping.

Answer: Mr. Moeller replied that construction often must occur at night to reduce the effect on traffic during peak travel times, however; consideration will be given to the neighboring communities during construction.

Concern: One noise wall exists in Mrs. Ches' neighborhood, but many homes are not benefiting from it. Will locations for noise monitoring during Section 100 be selected automatically or will they need to be requested?

Answer: Mr. Moeller responded that initial noise monitoring has already taken place and sites were chosen throughout the corridor to give a representation of the noise within the study area. There is no need to request monitoring sites.

Concern: What was the reasoning for the recent toll increase at several Authority-operated facilities? Is the increase to fund the Section 100 project?

Answer: Roxane Mukai stated that recently announced toll increases will be used to support the Authority's entire capital program. While some revenue generated by the increase will be used for I-95 improvements, the increase is not solely for the purpose of funding the I-95 improvements.

Concern: What environmental impacts are projected near the Hazelwood area?

Answer: Sam Wilkes responded that while preliminary environmental impacts have been assessed, more detailed impact studies would be conducted during the next stage of project planning for Section 100.

ALTERNATES UNDER CONSIDERATION

Mr. Moeller then presented a description of each of the mainline and interchange alternates The alternates presented include:
The No-Build Alternate
The General Purpose Lanes Alternate with interchange Options 2A and 2B for the I-895, I-695 and MD 43 interchanges, and
The Managed Roadways Alternate with interchange Options 3A and 3B at the I-895, I-695 and MD 43 interchanges.

Terminology used in the descriptions of the alternates included:

- Collector-Distributor Road (CD) – a parallel roadway outside of the mainline to reduce access points and to accommodate speed change and weaving movements
- Driver Expectancy – perceptions and responses of drivers based on previous experiences
- Level of Service (LOS)– a qualitative measure of how good or bad traffic operations are, given as a letter grade from A (best) to F (worst)
- Mainline – the core portion of roadway that accommodates the through traffic
- Managed Lane - lanes separated from the General Purpose Lanes and operating under some form of restricted use. Management strategies may include restrictions at access locations (at ramps); by time of day (peak, off-peak); by vehicle type (trucks, buses); by type of use (commercial or occupancy); by price (tolling) or by direction
- Ramp – a short section of highway connecting two separate roadways

- Single Exit Interchange – eliminates weaving on mainline, provides for high speed exit, simplifies signing and the decision process
- Traffic Barriers (median and roadside) – longitudinal restraint systems used to minimize the possibility of an errant vehicle from crossing into the path of oncoming vehicles or hitting a fixed hazard
- Weaving Section – the crossing of two or more traffic streams over a segment of highway between merge and diverge points

I-95 Mainline
Alternate 1: No-Build
The No-Build Alternate would be restricted to normal maintenance and safety improvements. There would be no increase in roadway capacity or any significant reduction in the accident rate.

Alternate 2: General Purpose Lanes
The General Purpose Lanes Alternate includes the provision of additional general purpose lanes as necessary to accommodate the projected traffic demand. In addition, a barrier-separated CD roadway would be provided from I-695 to north of MD 43. In order to reach a desirable weekday and weekend level of service (LOS) E and D, respectively, this alternate would provide the following number of lanes per direction:

- an additional fourth lane in each direction of I-95 from approximately ¼ mile south of the I-895 interchange to the point where I-95 merges with I-895,
- six lanes between the I-895 split and I-695, and
- five mainline and two CD lanes per direction between I-695 and MD 43.

North of MD 43, the roadway would transition from five general purpose and two CD lanes per direction to tie into the existing four lanes per direction.

Alternate 3: Managed Lanes
The Managed Lanes Alternate would include two managed lanes per direction on I-95 between I-895 and north of MD 43, along with additional general purpose lanes as needed to operate between LOS E and LOS F. In addition, a barrier-separated CD roadway would be provided from I-695 to north of MD 43. In order to provide the desired level of service, this concept would provide the following number of lanes per direction:

- An additional general purpose lane would be provided in each direction of I-95 from approximately ¼ mile south of the I-895 interchange to the point where I-95 merges with I-895.
- Two managed lanes and four general purpose lanes would be provided between the I-895 split and I-695. It has not yet been determined whether the managed roadway and general purpose roadway will be separated by barrier.
- A two-lane managed roadway, a three-lane general purpose roadway, and a two-lane CD roadway would be provided per direction between I-695 and MD 43. Each roadway would be barrier-separated.

North of MD 43, the roadway would transition from the seven-lane section (two-lane managed, three-lane general purpose, and two-lane CD roadways) per direction to join the existing four lanes per direction.

The managed lanes could operate under a single management strategy 24-hours per day, or on a "time-share basis" with different restrictions at different times of day. Management strategies could include restrictions at access locations (ramps) by time of day (peak/off-peak), by vehicle-type (trucks/buses), by type of use (commercial/high occupancy vehicle (HOV), or by price (variable or fixed). Managed lanes could be designed for flexibility so that management strategies can be modified over time to maximize person moving capacity, optimize vehicle carrying capacity, and achieve transportation and community goals.

Interchange Options

I-95/I-895 (N) Split Interchange
Alternate 2, Option A: This option retains the configuration of the existing interchange, but provides a fourth lane on southbound I-95 by widening the existing bridge over I-895. The fourth lane would continue to a point approximately ¼ mile south of the I-895 interchange. This option detains the appearance of I-895 as the through movement in the interchange and adds a third lane on southbound I-895 to the Moravia Road off-ramp. Northbound I-895 remains on existing alignment.

Alternate 2, Option B: This option emphasizes I-95 as the through movement in the interchange. Northbound I-895 will cross over the northbound and southbound I-95 roadways and a third lane on southbound I-895 will be extended to the Moravia Road off-ramp.

Alternate 3, Option A: This option is similar to Alternate 2, Option A. In addition, it provides managed roadway access to and from I-895 with ramps that cross over the I-95 general-purpose lanes.

Alternate 3, Option B: This option is similar to Alternate 2, Option B. In addition, it provides managed roadway access to and from I-895 with ramps connecting the I-95 and I-895 medians. These ramps cross over the I-95 southbound general-purpose lanes. The managed lane ramp to southbound I-895 forms a third lane, which ends in the vicinity of Moravia Road.

I-95/I-695 Interchange
Alternate 2, Option A: This option replaces all left-hand entrance and exit ramps with right-hand entrances and exit ramps to meet driver expectations of ramp locations on freeways. Exit ramps split to provide access to both directions of travel on the cross street and entrance ramps contain a merge. Four roadway tiers or levels are needed to provide for all mainline ramp movements.

Alternate 2, Option B: This option retains portions of the existing interchange configuration, however three ramps which create six left-hand exit/entrance movements are removed. The southbound I-95 to eastbound I-695 (inner loop) and eastbound I-695 to northbound I-95 ramps are replaced with right-hand directional ramps. The westbound I-695 (outer loop) to southbound I-95 ramp is also removed and replaced with a loop ramp.

Alternate 3, Option A: This option retains the I-695 mainline alignment. All connections between the I-95 general-purpose lanes and I-695 are provided with right-hand entrance and exit ramps. I-95 managed roadway access is provided with right-hand ramps in the median of both roadways except that left-hand exit/entrance ramps link westbound I-695 to the I-95 managed roadway. This option provides for a potential connection between the managed roadway and planned, managed 9HOV) lanes in the median of I-695 to the west of I-95.

Alternate 3, Option B: This option is similar to Alternate 3, Option A. I-95 managed roadway access is provided with left-hand ramps in the median of both roadways. This option provides for a potential connection between the managed roadway and planned, managed (HOV) lanes in the median of I-695 to the west of I-95.

I-95/MD 43 Interchange
Alternate 2, Option A: This option includes a single exit and entrance point along I-95 northbound and southbound and MD 43 eastbound and westbound. Two lane ramps diverge from northbound or southbound I-95 with one lane directed to eastbound and one lane directed to westbound MD 43. Similarly, ramps from eastbound or westbound MD 43 are merged together before joining I-95. There would be no weaving movements within the interchange.

Alternate 2, Option B: This option provides a partial cloverleaf interchange. Loop ramps are provided from MD 43 westbound to I-95 southbound. All other movements are provided via direct ramps and the direct ramps connect to MD 43 at signalized intersections. There would be no weaving movements within the interchange.

Alternate 3, Option A: This option has a general-purpose ramp configuration similar to Alternate 2, Option A. In addition, the MD 43 eastbound and westbound roadways are separated and a managed roadway connection is provided between the relocated MD 43 roadways. Access to the I-95 managed roadway is provided via ramps that rise to meet the MD 43 managed roadway connection at a signalized intersection in the middle of the interchange.

Alternate 3, Option B: Under this option, the eastbound and westbound through lanes of MD 43 are separated significantly, allowing access to the managed lanes to be accomplished within the median of MD 43. From I-95 north and south, single point exists would divide to provide access to both eastbound and westbound MD 43. From MD 43 east and west, single point exits would divide to provide access to both northbound and southbound I-95.

Members were then given an opportunity to examine the graphic representations of each interchange that were available and ask questions.

Question: Al Zorn expressed a concern for the number of rear-end type accidents near the I-95/Chesaco Avenue crossing.

Answer: Matt Wolniak confirmed that nearly 50% of accidents on I-95 between I-895 and I-695 are rear-end type accidents which could be related to the existing congestion queues in the area.. Ms. Mukai noted that I-95 is generally regarded as safer than comparable interstates in Maryland.

Question: J. Bierman inquired about the possible addition of a "left" (westward) movement from the exit to Lombard Street from I-95.

Answer: Mr. Moeller stated that the community to the west of this intersection was opposed to a westward ramp when the interchange was constructed years ago. With the existing development of the area, a ramp constructed in this direction would not meet current design standards and is, therefore, not feasible.

Question: Mr. Bierman also asked where the project would be in approximately 5 years.

Answer: Mr. Moeller responded that the project would be in Project Planning until late 2004. Design is expected to begin in late 2004 and construction is expected to begin in 2006.

Question: Mr. Bierman asked if taxes would be raised in order to fund the I-95 projects. He noted that the state of Maryland already has a gas tax higher than that of other states.

Answer: Keith Duerling responded that the Authority does not receive revenue generated by the gas tax. The project will be funded using revenue generated from toll collection.

TRANSIT

Ken Goon then gave a brief transit presentation. He explained that the Authority is working with the Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) during the Section 100 project planning study to coordinate planned highway improvements with planned transit services and strategies. MTA recently developed a long-term plan for meeting transit needs within the Baltimore region. The plan calls for expanding transit service and supplementing the existing Maryland Rail Commuter (MARC) service in the I-95 corridor. As transit projects are adopted unto the region's plans and models, their effect will be incorporated into future project planning studies.

Mr. Seymour asked if a monorail system, similar to that in Walt Disney World, would be a more efficient use of space.

Mr. Goon stated that the difference in cost between construction of a light rail and construction of a monorail type system is the main difference. The costs for the elevated structure must be taken into consideration.

The meeting was adjourned with a reminder of the next Focus Group meeting to be held on October 27, 2003 at the Perry Hall Middle School.

If you have any questions or comments concerning the minutes, please contact the Authority Project Manager, Ms. Melissa Williams, by telephone at (410) 288-8400 extension 383 or by E mail at Mwilliams9@mdtransportationauthority.com.